

**GENETIC STUDIES WITH ARMORED SCALES (HEMIPTERA: DIASPIDAE) AND *Aphytis* spp.
(HYMENOPTERA: APHELINIDAE) ON AVOCADOS FROM VARIOUS AREAS OF THE WORLD**

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Shipments of Mexican Hass avocados into California began February 2007. Several species of armoured scales have been detected on these fruit including a previously undescribed species, which is tentatively assigned to the *Abgrallaspis/Diaspidiotus* complex. Latania scale, *Hemiberlesia lataniae* (Signoret), used to be a significant problem on avocados in California but it and other armoured scales have been under excellent biological control on this crop in the state since the 1940's. For this reason, introduction of a new species of armoured scale, which based on levels of scale on imported fruit appears to be a significant problem in Mexico, is a concern. To address this concern, we have initiated genetic profiling of both introduced Mexican scales and related scales present in the U.S. and other avocado growing regions of the world, along with various *Aphytis* spp. (a parasitoid) associated with these scales. The results of our work will be posted in GenBank on the web and thus will be available to the scientific community and others. We encourage any avocado researchers who are willing to do so to send us armoured scale and *Aphytis* spp. samples so that these may be included in our genetic examination. The protocol for such shipments is described in our poster. We believe the genetic profiling of armoured scales and their associated *Aphytis* parasitoids will be of benefit to the worldwide avocado community to assist in better understanding what species are present in particular regions and/or in identifying new species that appear.

